

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

1 (800) 315-6338 (MEET) Code: 58756# (KUSKO)

Meeting Summary

June 13, 2011

Called to order at 10:02 am at ADFG in Bethel and adjourned at 2:00 pm. Ten of the thirteen members were present and a quorum was established.

AGENDA ITEMS:

- 1.) Continuing Business
- 2.) Old Business
- 3.) New Business

WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS:

1. KRSMWG Chair requested that Pete Probasco (DARD-OSM) provide a response regarding the issue of salmon shipped out of Bethel.

MEETING ACTION ANNOUNCEMENT:

The next KRSMWG meeting will be Monday, June 20, 2011 at 10:00 am at ADF&G in Bethel.

ADF&G RECOMMENDATIONS:

Effective 12:01 am Wednesday, June 16, 2011 to 11:59 pm Saturday, June 18, 2011, subsistence salmon fishing is closed in District 1 of the Kuskokwim River drainage, from the mouth upstream to Bogus Creek. Subsistence fishing for non-salmon species in District 1 will be allowed during the closure, the gillnet mesh not to exceed 4-inch and not to exceed 60-feet.

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

- 1) Support of the ADF&G recommendation. **Motion failed** (3 Yeas, 6 Nays).
- 2) (As an amendment to Motion 1), effective 12:01 am Thursday, June 16, 2011, to 11:59 pm Sunday, June 19, 2011, subsistence salmon fishing is closed in District 1 of the Kuskokwim River drainage, from the mouth upstream to Bogus Creek. Subsistence fishing for non-salmon species in District 1 will be allowed during the closure, the gillnet mesh not to exceed 4-inch and not to exceed 60-feet. **Motion passed unanimously** (9 Yeas, 0 Nays).
USFWS and ADF&G agreed to accept Motion 2

PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

- 1.) Bud Rivet (public member) asked what type of program is set up to identify the Kuskokwim Chinook caught as bycatch in the trawl fisheries on the high seas.

Dan Bergstrom (ADF&G) said there is genetic information to differentiate some Chinook, but it is hard to break apart the Western Alaska group of fish into specifically Yukon and Kuskokwim stocks. Dan Gilikin (USFWS) mentioned a report based on Chinook bycatch from the A and B season. Doug Molyneaux (public member) stated that Chinook salmon also share the Bering Sea with Chinook from Southeast Alaska, Cook Inlet, and all the way down to California, Oregon, and Washington. He agreed that it is difficult to differentiate Kuskokwim Chinook.

2.) Tundy Rogers (public member) expressed much concern about processors dumping Chinook bycatch.

Stuart Currie (Processor Kuskokwim Seafoods) responded that processors have been working on this issue for years. 2011 is the first year with a "hard cap" on the bycatch and trawlers are making a concerted effort to reduce the amount of Chinook intercepted in this manner.

Chuck Brazil (ADF&G) reported that the total allocation for Chinook bycatch is 60,000. In the A season the allocation is 42,000; of that 7,135 were caught. In the current B season no Chinook have been caught yet. ADF&G reiterated that only a portion of these Chinook caught are Kuskokwim salmon.

Beverly Hoffman (Sport Fishing) reminded everyone that the KRSMWG includes processors, agency staff, people who have been fishing for many years. The goal of the KRSMWG is to work together for sustainability and conservation in order to ensure that Kuskokwim Chinook return for many years to come.

3.) Daniel Nelson from Napakiak suggested that more fish came when the wind switched from east to south. Also, we should not be pointing fingers because there are a lot of additional hazards to Chinook to look at now. For instance, jet boats and hovercraft on shallow water may damage juvenile fish.

CONTINUING BUSINESS:

LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE REPORTS:

James Charles (Downriver Elder) reported that catches in Tuntutuliak picked up and he thinks that the fish are on the way. People caught at least 20 nice size Chinook over the weekend but before that the fish were small and the run was slower. Gas prices were over six dollars a gallon, so many waited until last weekend to start fishing. People were using 7.5-inch and 8-inch "king gear."

Mike Williams (Lower River Subsistence) in Akiak had a similar report as James Charles. He reported that people in Akiak began to put up Chinook for drying, that the fish were smaller, and fishermen were using smaller mesh than the average 7-inch size. The average catch mentioned was five to eight Chinook per drift, and many reported catching sheefish. Starting Saturday the Chinook were bigger so people who had waited to fish because of gas prices started then. Some people reported that lower in the river catches were higher but the run seemed late. His recommendation was to continue fishing for Chinook, not have commercial fishing in the river yet, and to monitor the subsistence fishermen.

Peter Pavil (public member) in Tuntutuliak reported 30 to 40 Chinook in one tide on Saturday and Sunday. The first Chinook were small and traditional knowledge states that when the first ones are small there may be many fish that summer.

George Alexie (Commercial Fisher) in Eek reported an average Chinook run on the lower river and that fishermen were doing well. Two or three families already had Chinook that they need and were waiting for the reds and chums to come. Many people were out fishing and he caught

22 male Chinook and one female, all an average size of two to three feet in length. Bud Rivet commented that someone caught 40 kings near Eek Island.

Greg Roczicka (Chair) in Bethel was fishing every day and noticed that on Saturday and Sunday the fish were getting larger, indicating that the main run was just starting to come in. People had been happy with the numbers of fish they were seeing from the first week of June, they noted a lot of smaller fish, so switched to 6" gear. Felt the run was getting back to 'average' as opposed to the 'late runs' in recent years. The last 3-4 days the run had slacked off though.

ONC IN-SEASON SUBSISTENCE REPORT:

***Note** that the summary for June 2 –June 5 was read at the meeting, and the June 9 – 12 summary was sent out afterwards. (Please see the ONC Current and Historical table at the end of the summary.)

Kuskokwim River Inseason Subsistence Catch Monitoring Report Orutsararmiut Native Council, June 06, 2011

Fishing reports from June 2 – June 5, 2011.

Families Surveyed	Families Fishing	Using Driftnets	Using Setnets	Both	Gillnets More than 6" mesh	Gillnets 6" mesh or less	Both
36	11	3	7	1	9	1	1

Compared with this time in a normal year, how are catch rates for salmon this week?

Chinook			Chum			Sockeye		
Very Good	Normal	Poor	Very Good	Normal	Poor	Very Good	Normal	Poor
4	4	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	1	0

Does the salmon run appear to be running early, late, or normal?

Chinook			Chum			Sockeye		
Early	Normal	Late	Early	Normal	Late	Early	Normal	Late
4	4	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	0	0

Comments: This week the ONC inseason subsistence fishery technicians distributed a total of 20 ASL sampling kits. Most kits were distributed to the people who had sampled for the subsistence Chinook ASL program in previous years and a few kits were provided to new families that expressed interest in sampling this year.

36 families were surveyed this week for the In-season Subsistence Monitoring Program. 11 (31%) of the families interviewed were fishing this week. 25 (69%) of the families did not fish this week. 3 (27%) families reported using driftnets. 7 (63%) families reported using set nets. 1 (9%) families reported using both. 9 (82%) of the fishing families use gill net using 8 inch mesh, referred to as King gear. 1 (9%) of the families reported 6 inch mesh or less. 1 (9%) families reported using both.

25 (69%) of the families interviewed had not yet started fishing and said that they were just starting to get ready for the fishing season. Many families are just beginning fishing after fixing and cleaning their fish camps after the winter. Interviewees not fishing yet were getting their equipment ready and waiting for

the fish run to increase. ONC technician's observations of fish activity on the river from the upper mouth of church slough down to Oscarville a total of 32 set nets, 31 drifters, and 6 whitefish nets.

Chinook: Of the 11 families fishing this week. 4 (36%) families this week reported the Chinook catch is very good, 4 (36%) families reported the catch as normal, no families reported as poor. 25 (69%) families that have not started their Chinook harvest are just finishing up their repairs on camps. Many of the nets that used to catch king salmon this year are a lot larger mesh than previous years, due to the early run and high number of large kings that are coming into the river this year versus last year slow and small run. Of the 11 (31%) families that reported fishing this week 4 (36%) families reported the run as early, 4 (36%) families reported the run timing as normal, no families reported the run to be late this year

Detailed feedback from the fishers on the health, timing, and abundance of the Chinook run were generally positive. Most who were catching fish felt that the run seemed to be healthy thus far, with much larger Chinook being caught earlier than last year.

One fisher reported catching a Chinook estimated to be over 45 lbs, and expressed surprise how large some of his first catches were this early in the run. Another fisherman noted that the Chinook are coming in strong along with very large size sheefish.

Overall those catching fish felt the Chinook are coming in strong, healthy, and more abundant than the past few years. Some expressed that their catches seemed better catches than average overall and a few families even reported that they haven't seen a Chinook run this early since they were much younger. Other fishers expressed that the catch rates for this time were normal when compared to their many years of fishing on the Kuskokwim but were better when compared to the last few years.

Chum: Still too early in the season to assess the run. N/A indicates the question was not asked specially at this time, as it is too early to be relevant.

Sockeye: Of the fishermen interviewed only 2 had caught sockeye. These two families (18%) reported the run timing as early, viewing it as unusual to catch sockeye in their first efforts of fishing for Chinook. No families report the sockeye run timing as normal. No families reported the sockeye run to be late compared to previous years.

It is still too early for most fishers to comment on catch rates for the sockeye run, although one fisher (9%) interviewed felt his catch for this time-period was very good and 1 family (9%) reported their catches as normal. No families reported their sockeye catches as poor.

Kuskokwim River In-season Subsistence Catch Monitoring Report Orutsarmiut Native Council, June 13, 2011

Fishing reports from June 9 – June 12, 2011.

Families Surveyed	Families Fishing	Using Driftnets	Using Setnets	Both	Gillnets More than 6" mesh	Gillnets 6" mesh or less	Both
69	41	24	6	11	20	3	18

Compared with this time in a normal year, how are catch rates for salmon this week?

Chinook			Chum			Sockeye		
Very Good	Normal	Poor	Very Good	Normal	Poor	Very Good	Normal	Poor
3	14	20	4	19	4	4	19	3

Does the salmon run appear to be running early, late, or normal?

Chinook			Chum			Sockeye		
Early	Normal	Late	Early	Normal	Late	Early	Normal	Late
11	18	8	16	10	3	14	12	2

Comments: 69 families were surveyed this week for the in-season subsistence monitoring program. 41 (59%) of the families were fishing this week. 28 (41%) of the families did not fish this week. 24 (59%) families reported using driftnets. 6 (15%) families reported using set nets. 11 (27%) families reported using both. 20 (49%) of the families fishing used gill nets greater than 6 inch mesh. Many referred to using specifically 8 inch mesh called "king gear." 3 (7%) of the families reported 6 inch mesh or less. 18 (44%) families reported using both. 28 (41%) families had not yet started fishing and said that they were just starting to get ready for the fishing season. Many families are still fixing and cleaning fish camps after the winter season and have not yet started fishing. Some families are waiting for the Chinook run to increase or middle of the run when they can catch all three species for efficiency. Many families reported that they are switching to smaller mesh gear to target the more abundant small sized Chinook. A few families specifically stated they saw the Chinook conservation posters initiated by the Kuskokwim Salmon Management Working Group and they would make an effort to target more abundant sockeye using smaller mesh size throughout the entire season.

Some families that started early are well under way to getting their subsistence fish for the year and some have reported that they have met their harvest goals for king salmon. ONC received numerous reports of concern about a person in uniform contacting people at their fish camps to inform them there would be a subsistence closure this past weekend.

No fishing closure was yet discussed or planned by the Kuskokwim Salmon Management Working Group but many people expressed they responded to this rumor by rushing to get their Chinook salmon needs met before any closures were enacted. Many fishers also commented that the river was heavily congested with set nets unlike they had ever seen before in their lifetime of fishing.

Chinook:

Catch rate: Of the 41 families fishing this week. 3 (7%) families this week reported the Chinook catch is very good, 14 (34%) families reported the catch as normal, 20 (49%) families reported as poor. 4 (10%) families that have not started their Chinook harvest are just finishing up their repairs on camps. Many fishers noted using 8 inch King gear but others noted they switched to smaller mesh gear in the form of 6-inch range or their 5.5 inch nets to get better catch rates of smaller kings as they felt fish were hitting the net and getting through. Others switched nets because they caught big snags on log debris and had to repair their 8 inch mesh.

Run timing: Of the 41 families that reported fishing this week 11 (27%) families reported the run as early 18 (44%) families reported the run timing as normal, 8 (19%) families reported the run to be late this year. 4 (10%) families were unable to comment on run timing as they had just set their net for the first time this year.

Many families noted that they were catching fewer kings after Wednesday, getting just a few fish per drift of in their set nets or none at all. Many fishers noted that they were catching more small kings this week with fewer large size kings than last week or normal years. A couple fishers noted they felt the smaller catch rates this week after good catch rates last week reflected the lull between two pulses of kings they often observe each year. Other fishers noted they are still setting up camp would just begin fishing this week and mid-June was the normal time they start fishing each year.

Chum:

Catch Rate: 4 (10%) families reported their catch rates as good. 19 (46%) families reported their catches as normal. 4 (10%) families reported their sockeye catches as poor. 14 (34%) families didn't report due to no chum catches yet.

Run timing: 16 (39%) families reported the run return as early. 10 (25%) families report the salmon run timing as normal. 3 (7%) families reported the run to be late compared to previous years. 12 (29%) families were unable to report due to no chum catches yet.

Many people felt it was too early to comment on the timing or catch rate for chum as they were not targeting them specifically or catching any yet.

Sockeye:

Catch Rate: 4 (10%) families reported their catch rates as good. 19 (46%) families reported their catch as normal. 3 (7%) families reported their sockeye catches as poor. 15 (37%) families didn't report due to no sockeye catches yet. Many people were catching sockeye as by-catch in their king gear.

Run timing: 14 (34%) families reported the run return as early. 12 (29%) families report the salmon run timing as normal. 2(5%) families reported the run to be late compared to previous years. 13 (32%) families were unable to report due to no sockeye catches yet.

MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE REPORT:

Wayne Morgan (Middle River Subsistence) in Aniak reported that the Chinook numbers were low. There was not much fishing effort yet due to the high price of gas. His catch using "king gear" was one Chinook on Saturday, five Chinook on Sunday, and one red salmon.

Zack Liller (ADF&G) reported that in the Kalskag area near the tagging wheels, he heard from a few fishermen that fishing is good.

KNA INSEASON SUBSISTENCE REPORT:

Please see KNA weekly subsistence survey results for June 6-12, 2011, on Page 7 of this summary.

UPPER RIVER SUBSISTENCE REPORT:

Ray Collins (Western Interior RAC) reported that four Chinook were caught at Blackwater. No Chinook have been caught in McGrath.

HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE REPORT: no members present

KNA Weekly Subsistence Fishing Report
June 6-10, 2011

Village	Family	Fishing Y/N	Gear Type	Mesh Size	Species	How does the run compare to recent years? *NR = no response	Average # fish caught:
Aniak	Family A	Yes	Drift & Set Net	6"			
	<u>Comments:</u> Interviewed 06-10-11 Sunday, used 1 set net, caught 1 king. Monday, used drift net, caught 1 king. Wednesday, 3 drifts caught 1 king.				Sockeye	NR	0
					Chinook	NR	1 drift/day
					Coho	NR	0
					Chum	NR	0
	Family B	Yes	Drift Net	?			
	<u>Comments :</u> Interviewed 6/09/11 Made 3 drifts but didn't catch anything.				Sockeye	NR	0
					Chinook	NR	0
					Coho	NR	0
					Chum	NR	0
	Family C	Yes	Set Net	?			
	<u>Comments:</u> Interviewed 06-10-11 Family reported that there was hardly any fish.				Sockeye	NR	0
					Chinook	Below Average	5/day
					Coho	NR	0
					Chum	NR	0
Stony River	Family D	Yes	Fish Wheel	?			
	<u>Comments:</u> Interviewed 6/10/11 Said had the fish wheel in for 10 days but only been using for a week. Caught 5 sheefish, 1 humpback white fish, 3 bering cisco, and 2 least cisco. He added that the run seems to be dropping in all types of fish as time goes on.				Sockeye	NR	0
					Chinook	NR	0
					Coho	NR	0
					Chum	NR	0

KNA Comments: Many participant families have not started fishing yet: Sleetmute (2 families contacted), Kalskag (3 families contacted), Chuathbaluk (3 families contacted), Crooked Creek (2 families contacted), and Aniak (2 families contacted). All of these families were contacted, but have not started fishing.

OVERVIEW OF KUSKOKWIM RIVER SALMON RUN ASSESSMENT PROJECTS:The information packet contained some background information on some new analyses and graphs that ADF&G and USFWS came up with to use BTF CPUE to help predict whether or not escapements for the Kuskokwim River for CHINOOK SALMON will be met. These new graphs were discussed at length.

Chuck Brazil gave some background: Chinook Escapement at Kwethluk and Tuluksak were below the escapement goals for three and four years respectively. The total 2010 Kuskokwim River Chinook salmon return was 142,796 with a spawning escapement of approximately 56,000, which was the lowest on record.

Correction Factor of Bethel Test Fish (BTF) Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE):

2008-2010 shows a shift in BTF catch efficiency, which is likely due to changes in gillnet mesh and river morphology. Specifically, the filament and the twine used at the project were more effective at catching fish starting in 2008. Therefore, for the same amount of effort more fish were caught. A 0.37 difference was calculated between the CPUE linear relationships of the BTF CPUE with overall Kuskokwim River escapements after this mesh change occurred. When the correction factor is used, the BTF CPUE data from 2008 to 2010 lines up with the BTF CPUE data from previous years, making it more comparable. (See both graphs on page 12 of information packet). We assume that a correction factor will continue to be necessary in 2011, however we will monitor both corrected and non-corrected values of BTF CPUE.

There is a strong linear relationship between BTF CPUE and escapement at Kwethluk River weir. This means that we can use BTF to project the relative escapement at Kwethluk River weir. Using only years when all weirs were operational (2000, 2002-2004, & 2006-2010) we see the same shift in BTF catch efficiency starting in 2008. Using the same correction factor of 0.37, 2008-2010 fit nicely within the strong linear relationship with BTF CPUE and Kuskokwim River monitored escapement. This means we can use BTF Cumulative CPUE to project relative Kuskokwim River escapement. The difference between achieving escapement needs and not meeting them becomes more evident after June 11 (see top graph on page 14 of Information Packet.)

Current BTF Chinook Data:

There was a good push of Chinook before June 8th, but then the numbers slowed way down. Even though they are better than 2008 and 2009, they are not as good as what we would like to see. The CPUE for Chinook on June 13th was 30. However, we needed the CPUE to be at least 50 by that date to meet the lowest end of the confidence interval for escapement. This means BTF CPUE indicates the Chinook run is about 40% behind where it needs to be for achieving escapement goals.

The CPUE values for further restrictions on June 11=31.4; June 12=38.9; and June 13=43.4. If inseason values are less than these, further restriction is warranted.

DISCUSSION OF RUN ASSESSMENT DATA:

ADF&G clarified that BTF uses 8-inch mesh and 5 3/8-inch mesh. The nets are 50-fathom drift gillnets. Two drifts are done with each net at three rotating drift stations. BTF goes out one hour after the high tide, once during the day and once at night.

Bob Aloysius (YK Delta RAC) asked why no fishing is done at low tide because some fishermen have good luck on the incoming tide when the fish are coming in and the water is lower. ADF&G responded that it is important to fish in similar locations and at similar times so that the data can be compared among years. However, testing at low tide and having set schedules are options that have been discussed for the future.

One reason that BTF uses three rotating stations is because of changing river morphology. However, Doug Molyneaux explained that in more recent years the channels have not been changing as much, so this more recent data is weighted more. ADF&G noted that the reason that BTF has not been catching lately is not because of changing channels, but because there is currently a much higher fishing effort on the river. Dan Gillikin reminded the group that the goal of BTF is not to catch as many fish as we can, but to standardize the methodology and compare with more recent years.

Stuart Currie (Processor Kuskokwim Seafoods) asked if the model ADF&G is using takes into account run timing. ADF&G responded that there was an early push of fish, possible because of a storm early in June. However, it is difficult to tell if the run is slightly late or slightly early because we only have a limited data for the current season. Dan Gillikin explained that the model was developed including many years' run timing data and therefore the confidence intervals were very good. Chuck Brazil emphasized that with the current model and data he was pretty confident that we would not meet escapement goals unless BTF CPUEs increased.

Doug Molyneaux suggested that Phil Mundy's data (using temperature to assess inseason run timing) suggests a near average run timing for the Yukon River, plus or minus a few days. He asked if the water temperature data from Point Moller could also indicate Kuskokwim River run timing. Chris Shelden (ADF&G research staff) responded that they have not seen the Point Moller data yet, but that Mundy's forecast is being applied to what ADF&G expects for the Kuskokwim.

Chuck Brazil stated that there is a good relationship between Kuskokwim River and Nushagak River Chinook salmon. The Nushagak is about 40% behind on their escapements for this time of year, as well. They are subsistence fishing there but not commercial fishing. Nushagak run timing is two to three days late this year.

James Charles asked if all the runs from 2006 to 2010 were late runs (See page 13 of Information Packet) because he has noticed that since 2006 fish racks seem to fill late in the season. ADF&G responded that 2006 and 2007 were late and 2010 was slightly late. Typically when the run is late there is low abundance of Chinook upriver.

Fritz Charles (Member at Large) pointed out that both 2007 and 2011 show a CPUE of 30 on 6/12/11 (see page 13 of Information Packet.) He believes that the Chinook from 2007 (brood year) will return this year and escapement will be met. ADF&G responded that 2007's run timing was much later than this year, but that anything is possible. However, it is important to

realize that we did not meet escapement in 2008, 2009, and 2010, so three out of four years we did not meet escapement goals.

Dan Gillikin agreed that many factors and some uncertainty go into salmon returns, which is why we use as much information as possible to make decisions. Independent lines of data have the same conclusions regarding 2011 Chinook returns. For instance, USFWS analysis of the Kwethluk River used SARON data (the number of juvenile fish in the river and their subsequent returns). USFWS also looked at the number of three-year old fish that had escaped the previous year. Both studies showed that the 2011 return would be low.

A member of the public asked if any Chinook out-migration studies are used. USFWS replied that these types of studies could be valuable, but would be very expensive and require funding.

Fritz Charles asked if the high water in 2010 affected the accuracy of weir numbers. ADF&G responded that the high water did not occur at the peak of the run so most of the fish were counted and the remainder of the run was estimated. Furthermore, many years of data are used in this model of plotting BTF CPUE against past escapements.

Much discussion followed regarding the recent "flat-lining" of the BTF CPUE graph (see page 14 of Information Packet) and fishing effort on the river:

The general consensus of agency staff and KRSMWG members was that the decrease in BTF CPUE was due to a drastic increase in fishing effort on the river. One member of the public commented that he has never seen this "combat fishing" before, nor so many fish racks full this early, nor so many nets across the river in Oscarville.

ONC inseason surveys also confirmed more effort in the last week, with some fishermen putting out two set nets and two drift nets. The increased effort may have been because a false rumor circulated, saying that the fishery was going to close on June 11, 2011. When the rumor was dispelled, fishing effort decreased and went back to average. However, ONC surveys showed that about one-third of subsistence fishermen interviewed had not panicked because of false rumors and elders believe that a second pulse of fish will come.

Bev Hoffman (Sport Fishing) asked if a correction factor was necessary because of this recent doubling of fishing effort. Chuck Brazil clarified that BTF is always affected by harvest and that the BTF CPUE will be lower if the harvest is higher. In other words, it is accurate because fewer fish are going upriver. The run index is currently 40% below where it needs to be and the numbers are not climbing. Holly Carroll (ADF&G) further emphasized that BTF CPUE graph, though affected by harvest, is far below the confidence interval where we would meet escapements, and even if every single person stopped fishing immediately, the cumulative CPUE would need to nearly double, which isn't as likely with a projected low return- it would need to be a very strong, late run to make up the difference.

Casie Stockdale (AVCP) was concerned about people panicking if a subsistence fishing closure was made, and that on the Yukon that happened and people harvested more fish.

Lamont Albertson (Sport Fishing) commented that, "A fish in the hand is proof that fish are in the river." He is very concerned that Chinook are not getting upriver.

WEIRS/SONAR/MARK-RECAPTURE/AERIAL SURVEYS:

ADF&G reported that the weirs were being installed on schedule during the third and fourth week of June.

WEATHER FORECAST:

The Kuskokwim Delta forecast for the week of June 13 –June 19 is mostly cloudy with scattered showers. Southwest winds 10 to 15 mph are forecasted for Monday through Wednesday. Lows will be from 40 degrees F and highs will be up to 55 degrees F.

The Marine Weather forecast for Southwest Alaska (Cape Newenham to Dall Point) the week of June 13 – June 19 is W wind 10 to 15 KT Monday and Tuesday. Wednesday will have a SE wind of 15 KT. Thursday and Friday will have an E wind of 20 KT.

RECOMMENDATION:

Chuck Brazil (ADF&G) recommended that effective 12:01 am Wednesday, June 16, 2011 to 11:59 pm Saturday, June 18, 2011, subsistence salmon fishing is closed in District 1 of the Kuskokwim River drainage from the mouth upstream to Bogus Creek. Subsistence fishing would be closed in this area for four days in order to allow passage upriver. Subsistence fishing for non-salmon species in District 1 will be allowed during the closure, the gillnet mesh not to exceed 4-inch and not to exceed 60-feet.

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

MOTION 1: Motion 1 (in support of the ADF&G recommendation) states that effective 12:01 am Wednesday, June 16, 2011 to 11:59 pm Saturday, June 18, 2011, subsistence salmon fishing is closed in District 1 of the Kuskokwim River drainage, from the mouth upstream to Bogus Creek. Subsistence fishing for non-salmon species in District 1 will be allowed during the closure, the gillnet mesh not to exceed 4-inch and not to exceed 60-feet. **Motion failed** (3 yeas, 6 Nays).

COMMENTS FOR MOTION 1:

Ray Collins supported the motion because he was concerned that “no one listened to conservation.” He was especially worried because the first pulse of fish was headed for upriver and he was concerned about the Tokotna and Salmon Rivers. He urged, “It is important that this pulse gets up to the headwaters.”

Much discussion about the length of the closure followed:

James Charles worried that after the closure people would fish harder. He suggested hour-long closures instead of days because some people still have not caught their fish. He agreed that the first pulse of fish needs to get upriver.

Alissa Joseph (ONC) disagreed with the motion, saying that in retaliation of such a long closure people may break the law. She said, “We told the people that the rumor was false and they took their nets out, and now the rumor is true.” People may have been “combat fishing” near Bethel but she is concerned about the fishermen in other villages who are just starting now.

Bev Hoffman said, “We all are concerned about conservation,” but she was concerned about the closure because her family has nothing on their drying rack yet because this coming week is

when they always start fishing. She felt that the closure wouldn't go over well and would create hardship and hard feelings. "Hours versus days would be a better compromise."

Fritz Charles suggested postponing the closure for seven days in order to give people a chance to fish. Ray Collins (who made the motion) responded, "We can't wait a whole week because we need to let some fish go upriver." He said that some action right now is essential, even if the motion went to hours or different days. Totally postponing it for a week would have the same effect we're seeing now, with more people out there combat fishing, because they know that a closure is coming.

A member of the public agreed that more people would be out there fishing. He referred to Alaska State Law 16.05.258 stating, "A reasonable opportunity must be provided to subsistence users first, before providing to other uses of any harvestable surplus of a fish or game population." A reasonable timeline should be given to subsistence fishermen to get ready for the closure, and tomorrow two days is not enough. He thought one or two day closures would be better with more warning.

Bob Aloysius recalled the KRSMWG meeting in Anchorage on March 18th. At that meeting, members voiced a preference for closures on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays to protect the traditional fish camp way of smoking the fish all week, with the intention of restricting more "recreational" weekend fishers from Bethel. He reminded the group that discussions at the March meeting had been about 3-day closures, not 4-day. One day of notice is not realistic, though.

Doug Molyneaux mentioned that the Lower Yukon was currently in the middle of a 5 1/2-day closure.

ADF&G then clarified that subsistence fishing for non-salmon species in District 1 would be allowed during the closure, with gillnet mesh not exceeding 4-inches and not longer than 60-feet.

After empathizing with everyone's frustrations and concerns, Ray Collins said that Bethel remained an intercept fishery for upriver. He did not see any other viable solutions offered, so he did not see any other way than a closure.

Chuck Brazil clarified that we were currently at 14% of the run, and in three days the run will build to 25%. Next week it will build to 50%. He stated that, "Realistically, for us to get any savings upriver, now is actually the time to make a decision in order to move fish past the fishery here [in Bethel]." Because it takes about four days for the fish to get from the lower river to Tuluksak, the closure would have to be for multiple days to be effective. "It would be really good to get a good solid push of fish past where the main part of the fishery is, to help us achieve our escapements and so we can have some confidence in our numbers. We can re-evaluate those numbers and see where we stand over the weekend. If those numbers are good and we feel comfortable with the analysis of the BTF CPUE, then we can decide if we can leave it open or go to shorter closures or not." He noted that the in-depth analysis of BTF would occur that would be adjusted for the lack of subsistence fishing during the closure. He also added that ADF&G's recommendation seemed reasonable, considering the current situation, the

last three years of poor escapements, and what has been happening in other area systems. Finally, he said, "I really do empathize with everybody."

Sport Fish member asked if a Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday closure would be effective. Dan Gillikin responded with his concern that the fishing effort that would occur before the closure started would be on the front end of the run. He explained, "It is easier to get conservation numbers earlier in the run because it is easier to make up numbers earlier rather than later." USFWS agreed with ADF&G that only three days of closure would be ineffective because the fish would not get past the lower river fishery.

Stuart Currie asked if the BTF data would need to be corrected based on the decrease in the subsistence harvest. Dan Gillikin responded we could generate an exploitation rate and generate a correction factor for the current trend in BTF CPUE data. However, he made it clear that BTF CPUE was only one tool out of many indicators that would be used to make a decision.

Bob Aloysius then suggested a closure beginning on Thursday, June 16th, so people would have more notice to prepare for it.

MOTION 2: As an amendment to Motion 1, Motion 2 states that effective 12:01 am Thursday, June 16, 2011, to 11:59 pm Sunday, June 19, 2011, subsistence salmon fishing is closed in District 1 of the Kuskokwim River drainage, from the mouth upstream to Bogus Creek. Subsistence fishing for non-salmon species in District 1 will be allowed during the closure, the gillnet mesh not to exceed 4-inch and not to exceed 60-feet. **Motion passed unanimously (9 Yeas, 0 Nays).** **USFWS and ADF&G agreed to accept Motion 2, as stated above.**

COMMENTS FOR MOTION 2:

ADF&G clarified that sport fishing would be closed District 1, as well.

Chris Sheldon explained that they are not necessarily trying to reduce harvest, but to spread it out over the run. Even if people do not have much time to prepare, they may have fishing opportunities after the closure.

Fritz Charles worried that the weather would be rainy soon, which was bad for drying. He was worried about fish spoiling and "that ADF&G would make them into criminals for wasting." Bev Hoffman disagreed, saying that subsistence fishermen never have a guarantee on the weather, and people have to take extra care of fish, but we should be committed to getting fish to the spawning grounds and that the weather forecast during the closure was mostly cloudy and not good for drying, anyway.

Gene Peltola stated that even a single day of delaying the closure could be worth thousands of fish.

Alissa Joseph approved of Motion 2. Bev Hoffman approved and stated that she was worried about having Chinook in the future. She said, "This isn't going to be easy and it is going to be hard to sell to people. It is going to be hard, but harder if there are no fish someday."

Greg Roczicka (Chair) liked that Motion 2 gave people who waited to fish more time to get fish hanging in their racks. He also liked that conservation would be at the peak of the run. What

made this decision so difficult for him was, "We have artificially created the situation by trying to be pro-active, than having this big push of fishing that created this 40% deficiency in the Bethel Test Fishery." He also thought that the parent years (2006 and 2007) and forecast in the level of returns for five and six year-old fish seemed pretty good. Even though it was difficult to support any closure, "earlier is better."

Even though he is voting for the motion, Bob Aloysius thinks that the fish are going upriver and people upriver just need to fish harder to get them. Bev Hoffman disagreed, saying that she called Crooked Creek every day last year, and they were trying hard to fish.

Many included pre-season outreach efforts in their comments:

ADF&G said that the whole point of the pre-season outreach plan was to educate people about conservation concerns and the first assessment point in June. Therefore, the agency made three months of effort to notify the public. Even though it was not what the department and what the KRSMWG intended, clearly the message got out because of the increased fishing effort early in the season.

Lamont Albertson (Sport Fishing) reminded everyone the escapement is the priority over subsistence. People upriver no longer subsistence fish because there are not many fish in the river there. They have no alternative. He agreed with ADF&G, that we have had plenty of time to think about closures since the March KRSMWG meeting.

James Charles felt better about Motion 2 and thought that people might expect it because they have been discussing restrictions since the Anchorage meeting.

Nick Souza (Processor Coastal Village Seafoods) agreed that Motion 2 should not be a surprise because fishermen's meetings had been discussing restrictions all spring.

Bev Hoffman recommended that KRSMWG members tell the public that this was a very tough decision. This was the compromise that had to be made in order to get fish to the spawning grounds.

OLD BUSINESS:

1.) Show Chinook Conservation posters and give update on their Distribution:

The KRSMWG commended Alissa Joseph for making and spreading Chinook conservation posters around Bethel. She thought that they were effective, because some of the fishermen surveyed by ONC said that they would focus on reds and chums instead of Chinook. However, even though the posters were meant to target the new people in town, one common response from fishermen was that they already knew to take only what they needed.

James Charles said that he hung his posters in Tuntutuliak. Bob Aloysius liked how the posters showed pictures of how salmon was prepared. AVCP hung posters at the office and put them in newsletters to all the villages.

2.) Update from USFWS on reporting salmon shipped out of Bethel:

USFWS is still waiting to find a mechanism for this to happen. It is not within the authority of the federal inseason manager nor is it possible as a special action.

Chair requested that Pete Probasco (DARD-OSM), through Rod Campbell, provide a response as soon as possible, especially because the Kuskokwim is having subsistence closures. He believes that this issue should be a priority at the federal level. Bob Aloysius agreed that something needs to happen immediately.

Lamont Albertson member pointed out that sport fishing may be part of the problem of fish leaving the region.

3.) Status on Iyana Gusty Award:

Holly Carroll (ADF&G) reminded the group it was last discussed at the April 1, 2010 KRSMWG meeting, and that Robert Sundown (USFWS) was going to develop something to present to the Gusty family, but there has been no update on this. The annual Robert Nick award was something that had been proposed by the group at the same meeting to honor those involved in community-level fish and wildlife conservation efforts, but no guidelines have been created for implementing this.

4.) Status on the replacement of the Upriver Elder seat:

The boundary that the KRSMWG uses to define upriver communities is Crooked Creek and above. A recruitment letter was sent out to upriver communities but the KRSMWG has not heard anything back yet. The KRSMWG requests help from upriver for recommendations.

NEW BUSINESS: N/A

GENERAL COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:

George Alexi commented that in Eek people were fishing hard at the end of May and the first week of June. He also requested that the Chinook conservation posters be hung in schools. He believes that if kids learn the message they will tell their parents.

Greg Roczicka expressed that he "really does not think that we should be here, and that this whole thing is artificially created," because of the rumor going around last week and people doubling their fishing effort. He "hopes that severe administration action is taken" with the agency person who caused the rumor, because he believes that this rumor is "truly what caused this."

Bob Aloysius encouraged people to use 6-inch gear so that the bigger Chinook can go through. He commended the KRSMWG for coming such a long way over the years and for "being more gentle and kind to each other." Contrary to what some people may think, "they use many years of experience and data for what they recommend. It takes a lot of thought, a lot of times very heartbreaking thought, to make motions and follow through on them."

James Charles said that he got nervous about not having enough notice in the first motion, but "he feels much better about the second one and people will feel better about that one because we don't like short notice." Talking about it at this meeting, other meetings, KYUK talk show,

and passing on information from the Anchorage meeting had made them all aware about Chinook conservation. He said, "Iyana Gusty used to tell us to work together up and down the river and with ADF&G and USFWS," and he is happy that we did and pleased that the motion passed.

WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE:

MEMBER SEAT:	NAME:
UPRIVER ELDER	<i>VACANT</i>
DOWNRIVER ELDER	James Charles
COMMERCIAL FISHER	George Alexie
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Greg Roczicka
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSTENCE	Wayne Morgan
UPPER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	<i>absent</i>
HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE	<i>absent</i>
PROCESSOR	Nick Souza
MEMBER AT LARGE	Fritz Charles
SPORT FISHER	Lamont Albertson
WESTERN INTERIOR RAC	Ray Collins
Y-K DELTA RAC	Bob Aloysius
ADF&G	Chuck Brazil
CHAIR	Greg Roczicka

Other Participants:

ADF&G Comm. Fish : Dan Bergstrom, Travis Elison, Chris Shelden, Alice Bailey, Doug Bue, Holly Carroll, Amy Brodersen, Zach Liller, Scott Ayers, Dan Steele

Sport Fish : Tom Taube), John Chythlook

Subsistence Division: David Runfola, Andrew Brenner, Dora Johnson, Hiroko Ikuta

USFWS: Gene Peltola, Dan Gillikin, Steve Miller, Robert Sundown, Aaron Moses, Darryl Sipary

OSM: Alex Nick, Rod Campbell, Pippa Kenner

Eva Patton, ONC	Shane Iverson, KYUK in Bethel
Iyana Dull, ONC	Doug Molyneaux
Daniel Nelson	Terry Reeve, Marine Advisory UAF Dave Cannon, Aniak
Nils Alexie	Angela Morgan, Middle River Subsistence member
Jolie Morgan	Bev Hoffman, Sport Fishing member
Henry Cole	Carl Morgan, Aniak
Tundy Rogers	Elsie Simeon, Aniak Tribal Administrator
Steve Walsh	Mary Sattler
Casie Stockdale, AVCP	Stuart Currie Processor Kuskokwim Seafoods
Bud Rivet	Maridon Boario, Senator Hoffman's office
Jeff Sanders	Alissa Joseph, ADF&G Board Support and ONC
Henry Reed	
Wendy Rodgers	

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G**), Orutsararmiut Native Council (**ONC**), Kuskokwim Native Association (**KNA**), Association of Village Council Presidents (**AVCP**), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (**USFWS**), Bethel Test Fishery project (**BTF**), Catch Per Unit Effort (**CPUE**), Coastal Village Seafoods

(CVS), ADF&G Commercial Fisheries Division (**CF**), ADF&G Sport Fisheries Division (**SF**), Regional Advisory Council (**RAC**), Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (**KRSMWG or Working Group, WG**), Sustainable Escapement Goal (**SEG**), Biological Escapement Goal (**BEG**).

ONC Inseason Subsistence Surveys – 2011 Current and Historic Catch Rate Information

Responses from the question: "Compared with this time in a "Normal" year, how were catch rates for salmon this week"? "ND" indicates that no data was collected because respondents felt it was too early in the run to assess this information.

Year	Week Ending	Number of Families			Chinook salmon			Chum salmon			Sockeye salmon		
		Inter-viewed	Fishing	Not Fishing	Very Good	Normal	Poor	Very Good	Normal	Poor	Very Good	Normal	Poor
2011	Jun 05	36	11	25	36%	36%	0	ND	ND	ND	9%	9%	0
	Jun 12	69	41	28	7%	34%	49%	10%	46%	10%	10%	46%	7%
2010	Jun 06	19	6	13	0	100%	0	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
	Jun 13	39	28	11	4%	50%	46%	0	72%	28%	ND	ND	ND
	Jun 20	26	23	3	9%	65%	26%	0	100%	0	0	96%	4%
	Jun 27	37	37	0	3%	73%	24%	3%	92%	5%	5%	81%	14%
	Jul 04	38	36	2	8%	69%	22%	14%	78%	8%	3%	69%	28%
	Jul 11	20	11	9	0	91%	0%	27%	64%	0	18%	55%	18%
2009	Jun 07	20	6	14	0	67%	33%	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
	Jun 14	43	38	5	29%	50%	21%	0	100%	0	0	100%	0
	Jun 21	44	44	0	41%	36%	23%	0	100%	0	0	86%	14%
	Jun 28	36	31	5	39%	55%	6%	3%	77%	9%	6%	71%	23%
	Jul 05	36	5	31	0	100%	0	0	100%	0	0	100%	0
	Jul 12	36	2	34	0	100%	0	0	100%	0	0	100%	0
2008	Jun 08	27	5	22	20%	60%	0	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
	Jun 16	34	17	17	0	76%	24%	0	100%	0	0	100%	0
	Jun 22	32	27	5	56%	44%	0	0	74%	26%	81%	19%	0
	Jun 29	33	27	6	52%	48%	0	15%	85%	0	56%	44%	0
	Jul 08	35	15	20	20%	80%	0	0	100%	0	47%	53%	0
	Jul 13	32	3	29	0	100%	0	33%	67%	0	0	100%	0
2007	Jun 03	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
	Jun 12	39	28	11	0	29%	71%	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
	Jun 17	40	33	7	0	30%	70%	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
	Jun 24	44	40	4	0	35%	65%	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
	Jul 02	36	20	12	45%	45%	10%	80%	20%	0	0	40	60%
	Jul 08	33	10	23	60%	40%	0	80%	20%	0	30%	70%	0
	Jul 14	33	6	27	0	0	100	0	33%	67%	0	17%	83%
2006	Jun 03	22	0	22	0	0	0	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
	Jun 10	32	19	13	32%	68%	0	0	0	0	ND	ND	ND
	Jun 17	36	30	6	60%	40%	0	60%	40%	0	53%	47%	0
	Jun 25	48	43	5	79%	21%	0	91%	9%	0	19%	56%	26%
	Jul 02	46	14	32	21%	79%	0	71%	29%	0	43%	57%	0
	Jul 09	38	8	30	0	100%	0	25%	75%	0	37%	63%	0
	Jul 17	26	5	21	0	100%	0	100	0	0	0	100%	0